

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 16, 17, 19-21, 24-28, 30, 31, 34, and 37, and add new claims 45 and 46, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application;

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-15 (canceled)

16. (currently amended) An apparatus to normalize ~~the~~ information in a file, as shared between a variety of software applications working on the file, the apparatus comprising:

a ~~source-first~~ Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file, whereby the first EPS file contains unstructured information required to create a printed document containing graphics images;

at least a first conversion module for automatically converting the ~~source-first~~ EPS file to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file using a first set of predefined parameter settings~~[[,]]; and~~

at least a second conversion module for automatically converting the PDF file to a ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file having a ~~consistent~~ format for the information therein using a second set of predefined parameter settings, ~~whereby a variety of software applications can use the information therein to access the normalized EPS file in a printing operation.~~

17. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the software applications access the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file in an automated manner.

18. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the normalization of the information is performed as an automated, hosted Prepress operation to the printing operation.

19. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file is a Level 1 PostScript file.

20. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the first and second sets of predefined parameter settings include color settings, whereby the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file includes a ~~consistent-predefined~~ format for color information.

21. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a PostScript interpreter for converting the first EPS file.

22. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a PDF library for converting the PDF file.

23. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a database accessible by the automated printing system, wherein the first and second sets of predefined parameter settings are stored in the database.

24. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a file server accessible by the automated printing system, wherein the first EPS file, the PDF file and the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file are stored on the file server.

25. (currently amended) An apparatus for normalizing ~~the~~ color information in ~~an~~ a first encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file within an automated printing system, the apparatus comprising:

a database accessible by the automated printing system, the database comprising predefined color settings for color parameters; and

a processor configured to:

receive a request from a client software application to normalize the first EPS file;

receive the first EPS file;

retrieve a first set of the color settings from the database;

convert the first EPS file to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file using the first set of color settings;

retrieve a second set of the color settings from the database; and

convert the PDF file to a ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file using the second set of color settings, whereby consistent color settings are maintained for the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file.

26. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor performs the normalization of the color information in the first EPS file using an automated, hosted prepress application.

27. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file is a level 1 PostScript file.

28. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor converts the first EPS file using a PostScript interpreter.

29. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor converts the PDF file using a PDF library.

30. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, further comprising a file server accessible by the automated printing system, wherein the first EPS file, the PDF file and the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file are stored on the file server.

31. (currently amended) An apparatus for normalizing color information in a first encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file within an automated printing system, the apparatus comprising:

_____ a database accessible by the automated printing system, the database comprising predefined color settings for color parameters; and

_____ a processor configured to:

_____ receive a request from a client software application to normalize the first EPS file;

_____ receive the first EPS file;

_____ retrieve a first set of the color settings from the database;

_____ convert the first EPS file to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file using the first set of color settings;

_____ retrieve a second set of the color settings from the database; and
_____ convert the PDF file to a second EPS file using the second set of color settings, whereby consistent color settings are maintained for the second EPS file. The apparatus of claim 25,

_____ wherein the processor is further configured to:
parse the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file and the consistent color settings;
locate inks used in the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file; and
compare the located inks against a database of inks to validate the located inks, whereby the ~~normalized-second~~ EPS file allows the validation to be performed.

32. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the first and second sets of predefined parameter settings represent a set of policies regarding the normalization of the EPS file.

33. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the first and second sets of predefined parameter settings are defined to enable the preview of the normalized EPS file or the printing of the normalized EPS file.

34. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor comprises:
a first conversion software module for converting the EPS file[.]; and
a second conversion software module for converting the PDF file.

35. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the first and second sets of color settings represent a set of policies regarding the normalization of the EPS file.

36. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the first and second sets of color settings are defined to enable the preview of the normalized EPS file or the printing of the normalized EPS file.

37. (currently amended) An apparatus for normalizing an encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file, the apparatus comprising:

a database of parameter settings representing predetermined policies for normalizing the EPS file; and

a processor configured to:

save the policies as in a database;

receive a request from a client software application to normalize the EPS file;

retrieve a first set of the parameter settings from the database;

automatically execute a first conversion software module to convert the EPS file to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file using the first set of parameter settings;

retrieve a second set of the parameter settings from the database; and

automatically execute a second conversion software module to convert the PDF file to a normalized EPS file using the second set of parameter settings.

38. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the parameter settings are defined to enable the preview of the normalized EPS file or the printing of the normalized EPS file.

39. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the processor normalizes the EPS file according to a hosted Prepress application.

40. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the normalized EPS file is a Level I PostScript file.

41. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the parameter settings include color settings, whereby the normalized EPS file includes a consistent format for color information.

42. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the processor automatically executes the first conversion software module by using a PostScript interpreter to convert the EPS file.

43. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the processor automatically executes the second conversion software module by using a PDF library to convert the PDF file.

44. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising a file server accessible by the first and second conversion software modules, wherein the EPS file, the PDF file and the normalized EPS file are stored on the file server.

45. (new) A method for normalizing information in a file, the method comprising steps of:

receiving a plurality of first Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) files;
converting each of the first EPS files to a different respective Portable Document Format (PDF) file; and

converting, in accordance with a same set of parameter settings, each of the PDF files to a different respective second EPS file.

46. (new) The method of claim 45, wherein the parameter settings are color settings.